



Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Massachusetts Announces 2017 COASTSWEEP Beach Cleanup

State Environmental Officials Encourage All to Come Out and Help Clean the Massachusetts Coastline

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BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that September 16, 2017 will mark the official start of COASTSWEEP, the Massachusetts statewide beach cleanup. Additionally, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton encouraged volunteers to join dozens of cleanups along the coast this fall. Organized by the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), COASTSWEEP cleanups will be held throughout September and into early November. Since 1987, thousands of COASTSWEEP volunteers have removed hundreds of tons of marine debris and other trash from Massachusetts beaches, lakes, rivers and seafloor.

"With more than 1,500 miles of coastline, the Commonwealth's beaches, shorelines and harbors provide vast recreational opportunities, economic benefits and natural resources," **said EEA Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "Through the annual COASTSWEEP cleanup, volunteers give back by rolling up their sleeves, picking up trash and taking down data to help identify the sources of marine debris and find future solutions."

COASTSWEEP is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by Ocean Conservancy, which draws hundreds of thousands of volunteers to coastal cleanups in more than 90 countries worldwide. In addition to the important task of removing trash, COASTSWEEP volunteers record data about what they find. This information is entered into Ocean Conservancy's international marine debris database, where it helps researchers and policymakers better understand the sources of global marine debris and develop solutions for prevention.

"Trash and marine debris have serious impacts on our oceans and waterways—from harming marine life to degrading recreational experiences along the coast," **said CZM Director Bruce Carlisle**. "Much of the trash collected during COASTSWEEP starts as litter on our streets, which washes into storm drains and out to the sea. So in addition to volunteering for COASTSWEEP, we can all help reduce marine debris by properly disposing of litter all year long."

From plastics as tiny as a grain of sand to items as large as abandoned cars, marine debris is more than just an eyesore. Sea birds, seals and other animals can be choked, starved or poisoned when they become entangled or mistake debris for food. Sea turtles are particularly vulnerable and can die after swallowing clear plastic bags, which look like their favorite food, jellyfish. Beachgoers can injure themselves on glass, wood or metal while walking on the sand or swimming off the coast, and boaters can find themselves stranded when propellers are jammed with fishing line, or cooling intakes are clogged with plastic.

A great way to get involved in COASTSWEEP is to organize a cleanup. All cleanup supplies (bags, gloves, data cards, pencils, etc.) are provided free of charge and cleanups can be scheduled at your convenience. You can also volunteer at a scheduled cleanup. To join a cleanup or organize your own, check out the COASTSWEEP [website](#) or call (617) 626-1200.

The Massachusetts Office Coastal Zone Management is the lead policy and planning agency on coastal and ocean issues within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Through planning, technical and grant assistance and public information programs, CZM seeks to balance the impacts of human activity with the protection of coastal and marine resources. The agency's work includes helping coastal communities address the challenges of storms, sea level rise and other effects of climate change; working with state, regional and federal partners to balance current and new uses of ocean waters while protecting ocean habitats and promoting sustainable economic development; and partnering with communities and other organizations to protect and restore coastal water quality and habitats.

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